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**Statement by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and
Marine Studies Programme (MSP)**

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I am grateful for this opportunity to address the meeting. My report is brief and I will attempt to provide you with some of the initiatives currently undertaken or planned at the USP and MSP.

The University of the South Pacific is committed to fulfilling its priority to provide a centre of excellence for education, training and research in tropical marine studies.

To achieve this priority the USP offers programmes of studies in the sciences and arts at all levels and in various modes.

The study of marine issues is by its very nature multidisciplinary and involves multiple stakeholders. USP in its activities tries to cater for this. It has the education, training and research resources to support your initiatives to ensure that the marine resources including fisheries are used and managed properly for the perpetual benefit of our people.

The USP has 3 campuses (in Suva, Apia, Port Vila) and Extension Centres in 11 of the 12 member countries. USP courses and programmes can be accessed through these campuses and centres.

It is pleasing to report that fisheries officers are prominently represented in our classes at pre-degree, degree and post graduate levels in the schools.

We ask that you continue to build capacity within your departments and that you use our programmes. At USP the intention is to provide the highest level of service by ensuring that our own staff members are appropriately qualified. For this reason, our staff are being supported to obtain PhDs to be in a better position to assist in fulfilling our mandate of providing appropriate education training and research.

USP has Institutes which are and have undertake consultancies and projects related to fisheries resource use.

The Institute of Pacific Studies has contributed in the publication of books in the use and management of marine resources.

Likewise, the Institute of Education has conducted community education and the provision of curriculum material for schools.

The Institute of Applied Science (IAS) and Institute Marine Resources (IMR) have conducted scientific studies on water quality, environment impact studies, baseline studies and other topical issue relating to the oceans.

I encourage you to work with these Institutes to address some of the concerns you face. Of course, activities will nearly always depend on the availability of funds but there is value in working together.

The University also has the Center for Development Studies, the Centre for Sustainable Development and the Oceanic Centre for Pacific Arts and Culture which promote social science research and public awareness.

Some of the university-wide initiatives that may be relevant to Fisheries departments are listed below to demonstrate the different areas that the USP is involved.

The USP Net 2000 is a high technology satellite communication system that we are using to link our region and provide flexible learning within our centres.

USP Net 2000 allows each of our campus, centres schools and institutes to exchange communication via e-mail, video transmission, audio transmission, closed computer networks, telephones and fax. This system was widely used in 2000 when USP was forced to offer its on-campus courses through the extension mode because of the problems in Fiji at the time.

The fact that the USP was able to successfully see the semester through was a good indication of the capacity of the university to reach our students across the region. The crisis also tested the university's ability to meet the logistical and technological requirements of overcoming one of our biggest problems – distance. In addition to normal extension courses, there were video classes and lectures on USP Net 2000. The USP ability to offer multi-mode education was tested and it worked well.

USP Solutions, the university consulting arm, was established in 1998 to expand the scope of USP commercial operations and respond effectively to the development needs of the region and the commercial opportunities that exist. USP Solutions specialises in the design and delivery of research, consultancy, training and project management services. Conferences and accommodation services are also provided.

USP Solutions invite experts such as yourselves to register with them so that your skills and expertise can be further used for the benefit of the region.

For a number of years now, our senior students have been participating in the South Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders – a semester long, university wide simulation exercise on topical issues such as tuna fisheries use and sustainable development.

This exercise is geared to introduce our future leaders to the complexities of this type of meetings.

Together with other regional organisations, USP has been involved with START (System for Analysis, Research and Training). Through START, USP staff conduct research and training on climate change and variability and changes in land use, biodiversity and human dimensions. Existing projects include one on Human and Ecological Dimensions of Urbanisation in the South Pacific and one on coastal Zone Management which will cover (Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Marshalls).

MARINE STUDIES PROGRAMME (MSP)

MSP is:

- Multidisciplinary and covers activities at various levels.
- Coordinates all university training, education and research on marine issues.

The Mission of MSP is to:

- Provide the necessary opportunities for Pacific Islanders to understand, conserve, develop, manage and utilise their living and non-living resources.
- Provide widest range of opportunities for research, education, training and employment in the marine sector.
- Provide for improved collaboration between the USP, island communities, regional and international bodies in their common goals in the marine sector.

The MSP administers the following entities through which it attempts to achieve its mandate.

1. The Marine Affairs Programme (formerly the Ocean Resources Management Programme) focuses on socio economic research. Fisheries management is about organising human activities as well as understanding ocean processes and fisheries resources. Within MAP our students are introduced to the international conventions, processes, multiple uses and the importance of integrated management, sustainable development code of conduct and precautionary approach.
2. The Marine Science coordinates the science courses. In addition to our own staff, other colleagues from Biology and other departments in School of Pure and Applied Science are cross appointed to MSP. Major areas of emphasis include ecology and tropical ecosystem studies, aquaculture, post-harvest, marine geology and pollution.

Formal qualification are available at the certificates, diploma and degree levels. Post-graduate studies is being taken in increasing numbers. Between 1998-2004, 25 of our students have benefited from C-SPOD (Post graduate) scholarships. Fisheries officers are involved in this process.

3. MSP Train is responsible for the organisation of all short training programmes. In association with International Ocean Institute (IOI) and other units within the University as well as externally within the region, MSP Train coordinates courses outside the university system. At the moment MSP Train is offering the Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment course.
4. The Atoll Research is in Kiribati and focuses on the problems and issues in atolls.
5. The USP has a field station in Dravuni in Kadavu. The station which has over 20 rooms is extensively used by overseas researches who are interested in tropical marine studies.
6. PIMRIS as we have heard earlier is responsible for gathering and disseminating information. We ask you to support this initiative by providing reports of studies and activities that are undertaken in our countries.
7. IOI has been our window to the world. Our association with this international non profit organisation has allowed us to raise funds internationally to train our people and to publicise our region and what is being done to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources.

IOI was instrumental in the formulation and offering of a number of training courses in the area of coastal Fisheries, Resource and Environmental Economics and Integrated Coastal Management that were attended by our own people as well as people from throughout the world.

The IOI also organised a series of Leaders Seminars in Suva and Port Moresby and was responsible for the Independent World Commission on the Oceans which was organised in many of our countries during the preparation of the International Year of the Oceans in 1998.

8. Institute of Marine Resources (IMR) is temporarily again in Fiji after a short stay in Honiara where it was burned down during the crisis in the Solomon Islands.

The IMR is struggling to be independent as it was in the earlier days. Its focus is now on coastal fisheries assessments and surveys and aquaculture. Exploratory work is now being done with the university and the Fiji Government for IMR to be temporarily relocated to the Fiji Government research/marine laboratory station on Makogai.

The USP is a member of the CROP Marine Sector Working Group. We have been part of the team to draft the South Pacific Region Ocean Policy which was talked on Wednesday. We had seconded Seremaia Tuqiri in November of last year to the Forum Secretariat to work on the draft policy.

Other activities of the MSP include collaboration with other organisation such as other CROP members, the United Nations Division on the Law of the Sea, the University of Newcastle and the National Fisheries University of Japan which involves our staff and students in its research vessel's annual trip to the regional.

USP is the regional node of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and is working to set up national teams. National teams are already working in Samoa, Fiji, Tuvalu, Nauru, NC, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tonga.

As Dr Drew Wright (SPREP) mentioned, 2002 will see the offering of the first short course under the Train Sea Coast method. Seven USP staff have been trained on this methodology which closely mirrors the Train X system that is used by the UN.

The first course will be on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Supplementary Technical Guidelines. We are collaborating with FAO, SPREP, SPC and FFA and will be hoping for a good attendance from representatives of member countries.

At the local level, MSP together with the IAS continue to receive requests to offer marine awareness workshops which assist people in the communities formulate resource management plans.

Through trial and error we have worked out a method of genuinely involving the people. This method include the use of Participatory Learning and Action methods, the involvement of provincial or local government structures and collaboration with government departments. By using guided group activities and experts who are conversant in local languages, we allow the people to identify the changes that have taken place in their societies, the reasons for these changes, the problems that emerge and what people in the communities can do to address these problems.

The method not only allows people to tell us what they know and what they can do about their situations, it makes the action that is formulated genuinely community owned.

With funding from Macarthur and Packard Foundations, we are reaching out to different communities in Fiji and would be willing to assist in other countries.

Earlier this year, we took this method to East Timor and conducted train-the-trainers workshops in Dili and Tutuala for Forestry Officers. We must be doing something correct in the coastal areas because our territorial colleagues were very impressed.

These activities at the community level are interesting because people have already organised their own resource management activities which include the declaration of no take zones, no take species, rehabilitating coastal ecosystems or the reduction of fishing licences. In adopting these methods, the people have identified activities which can reduce the threats to the sustainable use of their marine resources.

In some of these communities, we are now being asked to conduct monitoring training.

Working with the communities is fun because people are gathering data to complement their management activities and provide scientifically reliable information. If properly done, this can solve the problems of lack of data which we have heard mentioned at this meeting.

To maximise the lessons we learn from these experiences, we are collaborating with other organisations such as WWF, FSP to form a learning portfolio on community managed marine areas. Through this exercise we hope to better understand the reasons why community managed marine areas work and why they do not.

For the immediate future, we are hoping to strengthen our programmes with staff appointments and course development. We are looking forward to be joined by an Ocean Law and Policy person as well as a Marine Geologist.

We are working on developing new courses in shipping and port management and in ocean governance and policy. In association with the IOI we are working to develop a Virtual University that would enable us to offer post-graduate courses solely on the Internet.

These appointments and new developments will strengthen our programmes and contribute to making our activities more responsive to needs of the people.